

KASHMIRI RIDDLES.

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RIDDLES raise a momentary sensation of wonder and afford a light intellectual pastime, the intention underlying them being to tease but, at the same time, to please. They have a psychological value; they not only neutralize cares by diverting the thoughts, but also cause amusement on their being guessed or solved. By the shrewd-thinking they demand, even the dullest boy or girl feels a sense of keenness mingled with delight, and learns the art of being cheerful as well as of giving exercise to the brain—an art which tunes up the brain for the day's work and quickens it to think logically and precisely and, in fact, serves to improve its powers generally.

Children are carried by the current of curiosity born of variety. When other things begin to pall on them, riddles serve as pills to purge melancholy out of their tender, sensitive hearts. Nay more, they arouse wonder fraught with amusement and make them prattle and play in a mood, now grave, now gay. The solution may not dawn all at once, but when it does, a smile of pleasure lights up the solver's features.

Kāshmirī not being a written language, the riddles current among the people (most of which evince shrewdness coupled with scintillating humour) have been transmitted orally from generation to generation. This literature, therefore, constitutes a relic of ancient folklore. Fixed and unalterable enigmatical expressions of the ancients as they are, they appeal most to students of anthropology, philology and research. Moreover, such materials, though seemingly insignificant, are of the utmost value and importance to the historian, as they contribute towards building up the ancient history of the people. They are peculiarly valuable in shedding light upon the hazy and remote past of the Kāshmirī, who is characterized by conservative proclivities and adherence to things antique, and whose golden age is made up of elements borrowed from the picturesque and hoary past.

Prompted by the considerations stated above, I have collected all the riddles at present current among the Kāshmirīs, and give them in the following pages. Well might one soliloquize:—Happy the country, whose old, almost lost, literature is revived and rendered imperishable by that supreme art of preservation and circulation, which can defy destruction by Time—printing.

1.

Ablaḡ guri myāni shahsavāro !

Kadala tārtam wārawāro.

Maḡ chy na ta bu pārayo.

O my piebald horse (and) horseman !

Carry me slowly across the bridge.

Thou hast not got the tresses,¹ and I shall plait them for thee.

Answer :—Wooden sandals.

2.

Aḡ gaz māmani doḡ gaz pūts.

A head-sheet one and half yards long for an aunt half a yard in stature.

Answer :—Needle and thread.

3.

Ākāshi watshāyi budhā, pātāla lajēs zanga.

Illa bi-l-lāhi ! ts'nga, pāuts gām jāgīr manga.

An old woman descended from the sky. her feet touched the earth.

¹ Tresses refer to the strings over the toes.

There is none but God ! I will rejoice, I will ask five villages as *jāgār*.

Answer :—Snow.

4.

Akhā ākāshiy, byākhā nākāshiy, trākha gharas rāchiy—

Timan tran chu kunuy nāv.

One is in the sky, the second is in the *non-sky*, the third is guarding the door—

These three are of one and the same name.

Answer :—*Gānṭh*, viz., (1) *gānṭh* (kite), (2) *shishar-gānṭh* (icicle), (3) *gānṭh* (bolt).

5.

Akhā kund, yaḍ bharān ; byākhā huk, ās mudrāwān ; trākha parān Vedata Purān—

Timan tran chu kunuy nāv.

One being a thorn, satisfies one's stomach ; the second being dry, sweetens one's palate ; the third reads the Vedas and Purāṇas—

These three are of one and the same name.

Answer :—*Gor*, viz. (1) *gor* (water-chestnut), (2) *gor* (molasses), and (3) *gor* (priest).

6.

Andar kuṭhey gandharv sabhā ; timay bihit tāh ba tāh ;

Inside the room is an assembly of *gandharvas*² ; they are sitting in regular rows.

Answer :—Teeth.

7.

Asey pondey, zosey, zūmey ;

Nit snān kari tirthan ;

Warik waryas nonuy āsey.

*Nishi chuy ; ta parzantan.*³

It laugheth, sneezeth, cougheth, yawneth ;

It ceaselessly batheth in holy pools ;

It is naked from year's end to year's end.

It is nigh to thee ; recognize it.

Answer :—Face.

8.

Asmāni pakān kakāyā ;

Zangan malit kirmāyā ;

Achin walit burqāyā.

So kosa myāni pīrabhāyā ?

A bird is flying in the sky ;

Her feet are tinged with red dye ;

Her eyes are covered with a veil.

Which priestess of mine is she ?

Answer :—A swallow.

² The *gandharvas* are a class of demi-gods, who inhabit Indra's heaven and form the orchestra at all the banquets.

³ This is one of the sayings of Lāl Dēd, the hermitess (see page 65 of Sir George Grierson's *Lallā-Vākyaṇī*).

9.

Āyeyas ta gayeyas ;
Ku ku lanji becheyas ;
Mudar āsam ta kut gayas ?
 I came and went away ;
 I perched on various branches ;
 It was sweet to me, and whither did it go ?

Answer :—Sleep.

10.

Bāla pēṭha minimar ush trāwān.
 A doe is shedding tears on a hill.
 Answer :—Straining boiled rice in a pot.

11.

Bar dīt khar natsān.
 An ass is dancing with the door shut.
 Answer :—A mill grinding corn.

12.

Baras pēṭh kāla-shāhmār
Laṭ ta ās milavit ;
Ora āyas kenkalat,
Laṭ nīnas gilavit.
 A black snake is on the door
 With tail and mouth joined ;
 A lizard came up ;
 It twisted away its tail.
 Answer :—Padlock and key.

13.

Buthi bhasm, sanyāsi chukho ;
Athi lūr, pyāda chukho ;
Dhas dhas karawun day chukho ;
Pati kīni yet, krāl chukho.
 Thou art a mendicant, thy face being covered with ashes ;
 Thou art a footman, a stick being in thy hand .
 Thou art a god, making a rumbling sound ;
 Thou art a potter, with a basket on thy back.
 Answer :—Corn grinding-mill.

14.

Chetis ubras krihin kār.
Timay karān tūv tār.
 In the white cloud are black crows.
 They are calling " Caw ! caw ! "
 Answer :—Writing on white paper.

15.

Darakhtī jānawarā, darakhtas chu na bihān.
Baiza-kashī be-shumār, phāh chuk na zāh diwān.
 A tree bird, [but it] does not sit on the tree ;
 It produces innumerable eggs, [but] never hatches them.
 Answer :—Fish : likened to a bird because of its fins. which are compared
 with wings.

16.

*Dosi pēth kum-yāj ;**Na pilēs cāni māj**Na pilēs myāni māj.*

A cake of chaff is on the wall :

Neither thy mother can reach it

Nor my mother can reach it.

Answer :—The moon.

17.

*Ek mashādey do darwāza.**Āo miyān, trāo puṭāsa.*

A mosque with two doors.

Come, Sir, [and] let off a cracker.

Answer :—Blowing the nose.

18.

*“ Hā tango, nāli tango ! tāj phuturtham kalas pīth.**“ Hā bastī ! sūra bastī ! chus bu jānawār.**“ Guran guriy ! rangatsariy ! tāli kiṭur kyāh ?**“ Tshēn tsēmbar ! nasti tsēmbar ! yeti bīthak kyāh ? ”**“ O pear, green pear ! thou hast broken the crown of my head.**“ O bag-like ! O ash-bag-like [creature] ! I am a bird. [I have done it.]**“ O thou greedy of small fish ! O bird of colour ! what is that long needle on thy head ?**“ O thou cut-nose ! [with a] tiny nose ! why didst thou sit there ? ”*

Answer :—The blue heron with a long feather growing on its head, and a frog.

19.

Heri watsh haṭ ta bar-hangan raṭ.

A chip of wood came down-stairs and was caught by the top of the door.

Answer :—A comb.

20.

Heri wuth Paṇḍit tre deṇṭāni gaṇḍit.

A Paṇḍit came down-stairs with three girdles girt.

Answer :—A load of timber.

21.

Heri wuth Paṇḍit wozali jāma gaṇḍit.

A Paṇḍit came down-stairs wearing red-coloured clothes.

Answer :—Red pepper.

22.

*Hilu hilay cilas tsāv**Mukhta-hār gaṇḍit drāv.**Yāni bāzūk āv āv,**Tāni lokan zuwā tsāv.*

With effort did it enter the period of forty days,

It came out with a necklace of pearls about it.

No sooner they heard of its coming

Than the people got life.

Answer :—Paddy or corn.

23.

*Kachyan, katshan, kohan gayi zîr,
Kâbul, Qandahâr, Dihlî, Kashmîr.*
Grass, twigs [and] hills received a shaking
Throughout Kâbul, Qandahâr, Delhi (and) Kashmîr.
Answer :—Earthquake.

24.

*Khâm mewah pup kyâ ?
Odur mewah mudur kyâ ?*
Which fruit, while raw, is ripe ?
Which fruit, while wet, is sweet ?
Answer :—The cucumber and the mulberry.

25.

Khyun, cyun, trukun, wâri wawun ta gâv kyut khurâk.
Eatable, drinkable, crushable, seed for garden and food for the cow.
Answer :—A water-melon.

26.

Kuchihanâ âsam tathi âsam tsoray khâr wâtân.
I had a little godown, which contained only four *kharwârs*.
Answer :—A walnut with its four segments of kernel.

27.

Lam tal tham sat.
Seven pillars underneath a mound.
Answer :—The udders of a bitch.

28.

Lam tal tham tsor.
Four pillars underneath a mound.
Answer :—The udders of a cow.

29.

*Manz maidânas Haidar Hâjî,
Kami jânan begâri lâjî ?*
In the middle of the plain is Haidar Hâjî,
Which person imposed forced labour upon him ?
Answer :—A husking mill.

30.

Mûmatsi hastini zinda andram.
Live intestines in a dead female elephant.
Answer :—The inmates of a house.

31.

*Pântsav Pândavav pal tul,
Dituk dârit Lukhari Yâr,
Bitsi mâji dhakka ditus,
Pëv wâtît Khâdan Yâr.*
Five Pândavas lifted up a rock [and]
Hurled it to Lukhari Yâr⁴ ;

⁴ Lukhari Yâr (a corruption of Lauki Śrî Yâr) is the name of a *ghât* on the right bank of the Jhelum, near the sixth bridge at Śrînagar, where a fair is held on the 13th of the bright fortnight of Bhâdon (August-September). Khâdan Yâr is the name of a *ghât* at the north-western end of the Kashmîr Valley, where a fair is held on the same date.

The weak mother gave it a push,
It reached Khâdan Yâr suddenly.

Answer :—A morsel of food raised with five fingers of the hand and
swallowed down by means of the tongue into the stomach.

32.

Pěwân chu mohâ zan,
Samân chu kohâ zan,
Tsalân chu tsúra zan.

It falls like a mosquito,
It accumulates like a hill,
It flees away like a thief.

Answer :—Snow.

33.

Sará dyúthum bođ,
Tel phul wâtēs na ođ.

I saw a large lake,
[But] half a grain of sesamum cannot fit into it.

Answer :—Nipple or teat.

34.

Saras manz māmāni pyāyi
Wadavi gais, tsup hēni āyi.

Aunt gave birth to a child in a lake ;
We went to congratulate her, [and] she came to bite.

Answer :—*Jewar al-juwur (Euryale ferox)*. Its thorns prick the hand on
touching it.

35.

Saras manz palyâri hanâ.

There is a small fence round a lake.

Answer :—Eye-lashes.

36.

Saras manz sarâ bođ,
Sir phul wâtēs na ođ.

There is a large lake within a lake,
[But] it cannot contain even one-half of a broken grain of rice.

Answer :—The pupil of the eye.

37.

Satranji watharīt, shungân na kânh.
Phulmut pumposh tsatân na kânh.
Múdmūt ráza, wadân na kânh.

The durries are spread ; nobody sleeps [on them].
The lotus has blossomed ; nobody plucks it.
The king is dead ; nobody weeps.

Answer :—A frozen pool of water ; the moon ; a snake.

38.

Shiyitrah dâri ta shiyitrah bar chis ;
Shiyitrah gaz bhar panâh chus.
Râzas watskayo rats wâsanâ.
Tâjas pēth suna manâ chus.

It has thirty-six windows [and] thirty-six doors
 It is thirty-six yards in width.
 The king happened to get a good impulse [i.e., to build it].
 There is a maund of gold on its spires.
 Answer :—The Jâmi' Masjid.

39.

Shupri shupri hëndavënd,
Shrâki sati kapañân,
Biñi tithuiy sapadân.
 A water-melon, slantingly
 Cut into parts with a knife,
 Becomes whole again.
 Answer :—Clothing.

40.

Suna sanzi dârey rupa sanza lanjey,
'Arifan dup Zârifas yima kami ganjey.
 Branches of silver [are tied] to a golden window,
 'Ârif asked Zârif as to who had tied them.
 Answer :—A cobweb.

41.

Tali tali talâv khanân,
Râza dwâran lût karân.
 It digs a pond underneath.
 It plunders the houses of great people.
 Answer :—A mouse.

42.

Tilawân nêcivis suna sund tyuk.
 An oilman's son with a golden mark on his forehead.
 Answer :—An oil-lamp.

43.

Trê katshal kacey pût,
Kâth bâth tsâpân chu,
Pipyul hyû natsân chu.
 A lamb with three armpits,
 Is eating up timber [and] twigs [and]
 Is dancing like a black-pepper.
 Answer :—An oven.

44.

Tshar chêm ta bhar chêm ;
Râja sandi bâgh chêm ;
Dushâwla walit chêm ;
Mukhta-mâla gandit chêm.
 It is empty and it is full ;
 It is in the Râja's garden ;
 It is covered with a pair of shawls
 It is wearing necklaces of pearls.
 Answer :—An ear of Indian corn.

45.

*Tsu zangû, tsodâh zangû,**Uk zangû kulis pëth ;**Tasund mâz pâdshâh mangû.**Timan trên chu kunuy nâv.*

[First] having four feet, [second] having 14 feet,

[Third] having one foot on a tree,

Its meat is desired by a king.

These three have one name.

Answer :—*Khar* (ass) ; *khar* (worm) ; *kharbuz* (musk-melon).

46.

Wozalis gânas chëti kacipûti.

White lambs in a red-coloured stable.

Answer :—Teeth in the mouth.

47.

Yâni zâv tâni khut kâniy pëth.

As soon as it was born it ascended to the uppermost storey.

Answer :—Smoke.

48.

*Yapâri bâl shîn wâlân ;**Apâri bâl doh wâlân.*

This side of the hill snow is falling ;

That side of the hill hail is falling.

Answer :—A cotton-carding mill.

49.

*Yath saras sariphol nâ vëtsiy,**Tath sari sakaliy poni cën ;**Mrag, srugâl, gandî, zala-hastiy**Zën nâ zën ta totuy pën.⁵*

It is a lake so tiny that in it a mustard-seed finds no room,

Yet from that lake every one drinks water ;

And into it deer, jackals, rhinoceroses and sea-elephants

Keep falling, almost before they have time to become born.

Answer :—A mother's nipple.

50.

*Yira watshov khaira nēcuwâ samudaras tshânti,**Danda-mâlan shroni karân, shînas watân mâni.*

A rude boy came swimming down a sea,

He was jingling his teeth, [and] rolling up avalanches of snow.

Answer :—A churning-stick, separating butter from the milk.

51.

*Zethëm zyâthu razâ hyû, prat kânh tas nishi khotsân chu ;**Pakhar na ty khorav na ty, zorav satin pakân chu.*

Long like a rope, every one afraid of it ;

Neither with wings nor with feet, [but] by its own force does it move.

Answer :—A snake.

⁵ This is a saying of Lâl Dôd, the hermitess. (See page 66 of Sir George Grierson's *Lalâ-Vâkyânî*.)